IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

For the Examiner's convenience, a list of all claims is included below.

1. (Currently amended) In a digital communications network, a method comprising:

monitoring a plurality of links to determine state changes of the links;

enforcing an inverse multiplexing for asynchronous transfer mode identification (IMA-ID) ~~IMA-ID~~ check when an insufficient links state is reached, such that a link for which a near end IMA-ID matches a far end IMA-ID is maintained and a a link for which a near end IMA-ID does not match a far end IMA-ID is disabled;

relaxing the IMA-ID check when all the links are in an error state; and

re-enforcing an IMA-ID check when at least one link of the plurality of links recovers from an error state.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) In a digital communications network, a method comprising:

restarting an existing inverse multiplexing for asynchronous transfer mode (IMA) ~~IMA~~ group, comprising:

learning an IMA group ID of a far end IMA group;

toring ~~making~~ the IMA group ID in a memory such that the IMA group ID is made persistent;

using only links matching the IMA group ID; and

placing non-matching links in an unusable state.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein learning an IMA group ID further comprises:

resynchronizing the IMA group; and

extracting the IMA group ID from a first connected link.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein using only matching links further comprises screening IMA links having an IMA group ID that are involved in unintentional IMA group restarts for a matching stored IMA group ID.

7. (Original) The method of claim 3, further comprising looping back all links.

8. (Original) The method of claim 3, further comprising marking all links as unusable.

9. (Currently amended) In a digital communications network, a system comprising:

means for monitoring a plurality of links to determine state changes of the links;

means for enforcing an inverse multiplexing for asynchronous transfer mode identification (IMA-ID) ~~IMA ID~~ check when an insufficient links state is reached such that a link for which a near end IMA-ID matches a far end IMA-ID is maintained and a link for which a near end IMA-ID does not match a far end IMA-ID is disabled;

means for relaxing the IMA-ID check when all the links are in an error state; and

means for re-enforcing an IMA-ID check when at least one link of the plurality of links recovers from an error state.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently amended) In a digital communications network, a system comprising:

means for restarting an existing inverse multiplexing for asynchronous transfer mode (IMA) ~~IMA~~ group, comprising

means for learning an IMA group ID of a far end IMA group;

means for storing ~~making~~ the IMA group ID in a memory such that the IMA group ID is made persistent;

means for using only links matching the IMA group ID; and

means for placing non-matching links in an unusable state.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein learning an IMA group ID further comprises:

means for resynchronizing the IMA group; and

means for extracting the IMA group ID from a first connected link.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein using only matching links further comprises screening IMA links having an IMA group ID that are involved in unintentional IMA group restarts for a matching stored IMA group ID.

15. (Original) The system of claim 11, further comprising looping back all links.

16. (Original) The system of claim 11, further comprising marking all links as unusable.

17. (Currently amended) computer-readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of instructions, said plurality of instructions when executed by a computer, cause said computer to perform the method comprising:

monitoring a plurality of links to determine state changes of the links;

enforcing an inverse multiplexing for asynchronous transfer mode identification (IMA-ID) ~~IMA ID~~ check when an insufficient links state is reached such that a link for which a near end IMA-ID matches a far end IMA-ID is maintained and a link for which a near end IMA-ID does not match a far end IMA-ID is disabled;

relaxing the IMA-ID check when all the links are in an error state; and

re-enforcing an IMA-ID check when at least one link of the plurality of links recovers from an error state .

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently amended) In a digital communications network, a method comprising:

restarting an existing inverse multiplexing for asynchronous transfer mode (IMA) ~~IMA~~, comprising

learning an IMA group ID of a far end IMA group;

storing ~~making~~ the IMA group ID in a memory such that the IMA group ID is made persistent;

using only links matching the IMA group ID; and

placing non-matching links in an unusable state.

20. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 19 having stored thereon additional instructions, said additional instructions when executed by a computer for learning an IMA group ID, cause said computer to further perform:

resynchronizing the IMA group; and

extracting the IMA group ID from a first connected link.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 19 having stored thereon additional instructions, said additional instructions when executed by a computer for using only matching links, cause said computer to further perform screening IMA links having an IMA group ID that are involved in unintentional IMA group restarts for a matching stored IMA group ID.

23. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 19 having stored thereon additional instructions, said additional instructions when executed by a computer, cause said computer to further perform looping back all links.

24. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 19 having stored thereon additional instructions, said additional instructions when executed by a computer, cause said computer to further perform marking all links as unusable.

25. (Currently amended) A line card for use in a switch, comprising:

a central processing unit (CPU);

a system controller connected to the central processing unit;

random access memory (RAM) connected to the system controller; and

a group restarter connected to the CPU, controller, and RAM wherein the group restarter restarts an inverse multiplexing for asynchronous transfer mode (IMA) ~~IMA~~ group and wherein the processor monitors a plurality of links to determine state changes of the links and enforces an inverse multiplexing for asynchronous transfer mode identification (IMA-ID) check when an insufficient links state is reached such that a link for which a near end IMA-ID matches a far end IMA-ID is maintained and a link for which a near end IMA-ID does not match a far end IMA-ID is disabled.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently amended) The switch of claim 25 ~~26~~ wherein the processor relaxes the IMA-ID check when all the links are in an error state and re-enforces an IMA-ID check when at least one link of the plurality of links recovers from an error state.

28. (Canceled)

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